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Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7124th meeting
Saturday, 1 March 2014, 4.15 p.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Lucas	(Luxembourg)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.15 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in French*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council in the month of March 2014, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to Her Excellency Ms. Raimonda Murmokaitė, Permanent Representative of Lithuania, for her service as President of the Council during the month of February. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all of the members of the Council in expressing my sincere thanks to Ambassador Murmokaitė and her delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they guided the work of the Council last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I welcome the presence among us today of the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, and I give him the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: Since the Council was briefed yesterday by Assistant Secretary-General Fernández-Taranco (see S/PV.7123), there have been reports of continued serious developments in Ukraine. In Crimea, key sites such as airports, communications and public buildings, including the regional parliament, reportedly continue to be blocked by unidentified armed men. There are further reports of armed personnel taking control of regional administration buildings in several cities in the East and South of Ukraine.

The new Crimean Prime Minister, Sergei Aksenov, today released a statement appealing to President Vladimir Putin to provide assistance in "ensuring peace and tranquillity on the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea". In the same statement, he announced that he was taking control of security in Crimea "on a temporary basis". He told all security personnel to declare allegiance to him rather than to the authorities of Kiev. Following the reported deployment of additional Russian troops and armoured vehicles to Crimea, the Russian Federation's upper house of Parliament today approved the request of President Putin for Russian forces to be used in Ukraine "pending the normalization of the public and political situation in that country".

At the same time, in this fluid situation, however, there are some encouraging signs. One of them is the reported announcement from Kiev just now of the intention to broaden the Government to include representatives from eastern Ukraine. We also note that the calls for dialogue among all other interested parties, both inside and outside Ukraine, appear to be resonating.

Referring to the Security Council discussions yesterday about Robert Serry's fact-finding mission and his possible visit to Crimea, Mr. Serry was in touch with the authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. He came to the conclusion that a visit to Crimea today was not possible for logistical reasons. In his statement today, Mr. Serry noted that if he had travelled to Crimea, he would have conveyed, on behalf of the Secretary-General, a message for all to calm the situation down and to refrain from any actions that could further escalate an already tense environment. Robert Serry will travel to Geneva today, where he will brief the Secretary-General on his mission to Ukraine and discuss further possible steps.

The Secretary-General is gravely concerned that the situation has further deteriorated since yesterday's meeting of the Council. In that regard, let me reiterate the Secretary-General's important messages, conveyed in his statement of today:

> "The Secretary-General continues to closely follow the seriously and rapidly unfolding events in Ukraine, including developments in Crimea, and is gravely concerned about the deterioration of the situation.
>
> "The Secretary-General reiterates his call for the full respect for and preservation of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.
>
> "He calls for an immediate restoration of calm and direct dialogue between all concerned to solve the current crisis.

"The Secretary-General will be speaking with President Vladimir Putin of Russia shortly about the situation in Ukraine."

Let me say in closing that at this crucial moment it is important to recall the mission of the Organization. It always seeks the peaceful settlement of disputes. That is the essence of the Charter of the United Nations and should serve as our primary guide in this situation. Now is the time for cool heads to prevail.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): I thank you very much, Madam, for agreeing to have this meeting at such short notice. I thank Mr. Eliasson for his comments and for presenting to us the statement of the Secretary-General, which is very promising. What I am going to say now, including the recent information about the developments in Ukraine, in particular in Crimea, was sent to all the missions this afternoon.

The situation continues to deteriorate. As I said yesterday (see S/PV.7123), Russian troops illegally entered the territory of Ukraine in the Crimean peninsula on the ambiguous pretext of protecting the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine. A few hours ago, the upper house of the Russian Parliament, the Federation Council, unanimously authorized the use of military force against Ukraine upon the request of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, but the troops are already there and their number is increasing every hour.

However, such action by the Russian Federation constitutes an act of aggression against the State of Ukraine and a severe violation of international law, posing a serious threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country, as well as peace and stability in the whole region. The Russian Federation is not complying with its obligations as a State guarantor of Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum, obliging Russia, as well as other permanent members of the Security Council, to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of Ukraine. It is a dangerous challenge to the very principle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Russia officially rejected the Ukrainian proposal to hold immediate bilateral consultations under article 7 of the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation of 1997. The Russian Federation has brutally violated the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations, obliging all Member States, inter alia, to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.

Facing the announced military intervention in Ukraine, the Government of Ukraine requested that this meeting of the Security Council be held. We call upon the Security Council to do everything possible now to stop aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. There is still a chance.

Ukraine calls on the guarantor States to react immediately in order to prevent intervention. We call for international monitors of the situation in Ukraine with regard to the aggression of the Russian Federation. We urge all States Members of the United Nations to demonstrate solidarity with the Ukrainian nation to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country and the very basic principles of the United Nations, currently brutally violated by a permanent member of the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I would like to express my sympathy to you, Madam President, because under your presidency we have just wasted two hours discussing the format for this meeting. We agreed that only three people would speak in an open format: Mr. Eliasson, my Ukrainian colleague Mr. Sergeyev, and the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation. As I understand it, some of my Security Council colleagues already intend to depart from that agreement, but what can we do when there is a game without rules?

I would like to thank Mr. Eliasson for his briefing and I support his conclusion that, in the current situation, cool heads must prevail. Unfortunately, I must note that my Ukrainian colleague did not choose to follow that advice, and what I heard in his statement was a number of terms characterizing the situation in Ukraine and the actions of the Russian Federation to which we cannot agree at all.

We are discussing a crisis that should not have taken place. There was no objective reason whatsoever for it to happen. There was and remains our fraternal country of Ukraine, our neighbour. If we talk about this in terms

of the situation last autumn, it has a democratically and legally elected President, Mr. Yanukovych. He undertakes his functions on basis of the parliamentary majority in a democratically elected Parliament. His country is certainly dealing with serious economic challenges, and the leadership of Ukraine had serious decisions to make. In particular, it needed to decide whether to join or sign an association agreement with the European Union. That is a complex decision. One of the mistakes made the Ukrainian leadership was perhaps its last-minute recognition that this association agreement could have significant economic consequences for Ukraine.

In such conditions, the Ukrainian leader, President Yanukovych, took a completely constitutional decision that was fully in line with the prerogatives of the Head of any State, namely, to refrain from signing an association agreement with the European Union. That did not mean, as many have said, that there was a complete repudiation of a European orientation; he simply had to weigh the circumstances that had arisen at that time. Therefore, I repeat, his decision was fully within the prerogatives of the Ukrainian leadership.

This raises a question: Why did that problem need to result in street demonstrations? Why do those street demonstrations need to be encouraged from abroad by members of the European Union? Why did the representatives of several countries of the European Union need to appear at those meetings, which were ignited by protests against a decision taken by the Ukrainian leadership? Why did some officials need to talk about stirring up the public and opposition leaders? Why did there have to be such crude interventions in the internal affairs of a sovereign State?

There is another question that must be asked. I do not want to condone the actions of President Yanukovych during the crisis in reaction to the protests. Many things could be said in that regard, but I will just reiterate the facts. A leader of the opposition, Mr. Yatsenyuk, was offered the post of Prime Minister. Why did he not accept that proposal? Why continue to escalate the situation? Mr. Yatsenyuk could have formed a Government. If he had wanted to sign an association agreement with the European Union, he could have — and then he would have been responsible for the catastrophic economic consequences for the country if he had done so. Moreover, there will be presidential elections in Ukraine in 2015, and if the people do not like President Yanukovych's position, they can elect another President. That has happened before. Mr. Yanukovych lost an election and other Presidents were elected in Ukraine.

Why continue to whip up the situation? Why are some of our Western colleagues trying to prolong the confrontation? Why are they bringing armed militants into the streets? Why do those armed militants need to throw Molotov cocktails at the police? Why are they going after the police? Have we heard any censure of these activities from the Western supporters of democracy in Ukraine? We, for one, have heard not one word from any of the many institutions that promote democracy. It is therefore unclear why they even exist, if they do not react to such manifestations.

As a result of the emergence of the crisis, an agreement between President Yanukovych and the opposition was signed on 21 February. It contained the signatures of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Germany, France and Poland. It was a very important agreement. At a later stage, it would have provided an opportunity to defuse the crisis. Under the agreement, a national unity Government was to be formed within 10 days, constitutional reforms were to be undertaken, a new constitution was to be adopted, and presidential elections were to be held by December 2014. The opposition and its leaders pledged not use force. They were to surrender their weapons to whomever was supposed to keep them.

Why was that agreement not implemented? Why were threats aimed at President Yanukovych that resulted in his having to leave Kiev? Why, with all the traumatic changes that have taken place, was the first action of the Ukrainian Parliament and its new membership a decision to change the law on language, which accorded Ukrainian minority communities — not only Russians but others as well — the right to use their own languages? Why was that decision taken the very first day? This was not the result of a political coalition or process. One opposition leader sought to assert himself, claimed victory and tried to impose his will on the people. I would not venture to estimate their numbers, but there are a number of political groups whose membership includes radical extremists working in the field of Ukrainian security.

What has occurred over the past few days, which is the reason for our meeting today? A very difficult situation has arisen in Crimea and the eastern part of Ukraine in recent days. There has been a lot of concern,

and in Crimea in particular. People have come in from Kiev with the clear intention of repeating what they have done in Kiev and in the western Ukraine by replacing the regional governments. That has created great concern in the eastern part of the country, especially in the Republic of Crimea.

In those circumstances, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Crimea, Mr. Aksyonov, made a statement that was referenced today by Mr. Eliasson, in which he said:

> "In spite of the agreement that was reached with the central authorities concerning the inadmissibility of the appointment of leaders of power structures without the consent of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, in violation of the norms of the Constitution of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the Ukrainian laws governing the police, yesterday, 28 February, Mr. Igor Avrutsky was appointed chief of the local Crimean militia. That appointment, the presence of unidentified armed groups and military equipment, and the inability of the power structures of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea to effectively control the situation on the territory of the Republic have led to disorder and the use of firearms."

I will now quote the statement issued today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia.

> "On the night of 1 March, unknown armed people sent from Kiev attempted to storm the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. As a result of those perfidious provocations, there were casualties. The decisive action of self-defence groups prevented the attempt to overrun the Ministry. These developments confirm the aspirations of certain well-known political circles in Kiev to destabilize the situation on the peninsula. It is very irresponsible to stir up tensions in the Crimea, which is already very tense."

In those conditions, Mr. Aksyonov, Prime Minister of Crimea, went to the President of Russia with a request for assistance to restore peace in Crimea. According to available information, the appeal was also supported by Mr. Yanukovych, whose removal from office, we believe, was illegal. As a result of that appeal, the President of Russia, in accordance with our constitutional procedures, sent to the Federation Council the following request.

> "With respect to the extraordinary situation in Ukraine and threats against the lives of Russian citizens, our compatriots, and members of the military contingent of the armed forces of the Russian Federation deployed in conformity with international agreement on the territory of Ukraine, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea — in accordance with paragraph (g) of part I of article 102 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation — has requested the deployment of the armed forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine until the civic and political situation in Ukraine can be normalized".

I therefore draw the Council's attention to the fact that it says "on the territory of Ukraine" — not "against Ukraine", as my Ukrainian colleague said, but "on the territory of Ukraine until the civic and political situation in Ukraine can be normalized". In recent reports that I have received, including the statement issued by the press representative of the President of the Russian Federation, the President of the Russian Federation has not taken a decision on the use of armed forces on the territory of Ukraine.

With regard to how to get out of this situation, I repeat, as Mr. Eliasson said quite correctly, that cooler heads must prevail and we must return to the political path in the constitutional framework. We need to go back to the agreement of 21 February and establish a national unity Government, and we need to put an end to attempts to converse with our ethnic or political opponents in the language of force. The international factors that are especially interested in the situation in Ukraine need to call the radicals to order. They must advise the Ukrainian opposition, or whoever happens to be in Kiev, to distance itself from the radicals and not allow them to lord it over Ukraine, as such actions could lead to very difficult developments, which is what the Russian Federation is trying to avoid.

Ms. Power (United States of America): The United States renews our call for the international community to support the newly formed Government of Ukraine and to prevent unnecessary violence.

I would like to take a moment to respond to the comments made here by the representative of the Russian Federation. Actions speak louder than words. Early this morning, the Russian Duma acted to authorize the use of military force in Ukraine. This is as dangerous as it is destabilizing. We are deeply

disturbed by reports this morning of Russian military intervention into Crimea. This intervention is without legal basis; indeed, it violates Russia's commitment to protecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine.

It is time for the Russian intervention in Ukraine to end. The Russian military must stand down, the aspirations of the Ukrainian people must be respected, and political dialogue must be allowed to continue. We applaud the remarkable restraint and commitment to that dialogue that the new Ukrainian Government in Kiev has demonstrated in the face of hostility.

We have said from the outset that we recognize and respect Russia's historical ties to Ukraine, but instead of engaging the Government of Ukraine and international institutions about its concerns for ethnic Russians, Russia has ignored both, and has instead acted unilaterally and militarily. It is ironic that the Russian Federation regularly goes out of its way in this Chamber to emphasize the sanctity of national borders and of sovereignty, but Russian actions in Ukraine are violating the sovereignty of Ukraine and pose a threat to peace and security.

Russia alleges various actions against and threats to minority groups in Ukraine. We see no evidence of such actions yet, but Russia's provocative actions could easily push a tense situation beyond the breaking point. Russia's incitement of groups to come out to protest is not responsible behaviour in the present situation. There is a clear way forward that would preserve Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and address Russia's concerns.

First, Russia should directly engage the Government of Ukraine. Secondly, international monitors and observers, including from the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), should be sent to Ukraine. That is the best way to get the facts, monitor conduct and prevent any abuses. Russia is a leading member of both institutions and can participate actively to ensure that its interests are upheld. The immediate deployment of international observers from either the OSCE or the United Nations to Crimea would also provide transparency about the movements and activities of military and paramilitary forces in the region, and defuse the tensions between different groups. We are also working to stand up an international mediation mission to the Crimea to begin to de-escalate the situation and facilitate productive and peaceful political dialogue among all Ukrainian parties.

Our paramount concerns are to end the confrontation and to find a solution that allows the Ukrainian people to determine their own destiny, their own Government and their own future. That must be the goal of the Council and the international community. The United States will work with Ukraine, our allies and partners in Europe and around the world, and here at the United Nations to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and democratic future of Ukraine.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): As the Permanent Representative of Russia has suggested that some European Union (EU) member States were somehow involved in making the crisis in Ukraine worse, I should like to set out clearly my Government's position.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned by the escalation of tensions in the Crimea peninsula and by the fact that the Russian Parliament has authorized Russian military action on Ukrainian soil against the wishes of the Ukrainian Government. That action is a grave threat to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We condemn any act of aggression against Ukraine. We have therefore sought an immediate and full explanation from the Russian Federation for the decision to authorize military action on sovereign Ukrainian soil, and of the basis for it under international law.

Earlier today, my Prime Minister called on all parties to think carefully about their actions and to work to lower, not escalate, tensions. Yesterday, my Foreign Secretary spoke to Ukrainian acting President Turchynov, and made clear the United Kingdom's support for Ukraine's new Government. He urged him to ensure that the Government take measures that unify the country and that it protect the rights of Ukraine's citizens, including those from minority groups, in a spirit of inclusiveness. And he assured him of the United Kingdom's commitment to Ukraine's territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty.

The United Kingdom Government support the Ukrainian Government's request for urgent consultations, in accordance with the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, signed by the United Kingdom, the United States, Russia and Ukraine. We see no reason why these consultations should not take place immediately.

Yesterday, the Council expressed support for Ukraine's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and agreed that all political actors should show restraint. It is critical that the Russian Federation respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and take immediate steps to calm this dangerous situation.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): Since the current crisis began, France has worked towards a solution promoting the stabilization of a democratic Ukraine in which the rights of all communities are respected and which is part of the broader European family. This was the aim of the mediation efforts carried out by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, Poland and France. It was the aim of the agreement of 21 February, which the Russian Federation refused to support at the time.

The situation before us today is not a modern-day geopolitical spat. This is not a situation in which Ukraine is being forced to choose between East and West, which would go against all of the values on which the European Union is founded. I recall that the Union's very existence is based on the rejection of such practices of another age, which twice left our continent in ruins in the course of a single century.

The authorization given by the Council of the Russian Federation to deploy troops in Ukraine could, if acted upon, be seen as a threat to the territorial integrity of the country and would be a dangerous development for peace. In the Ukrainian crisis, France will continue to strive for a political solution that meets the needs of the Ukrainian people and preserves the territorial integrity and sovereignty of that country.

We therefore call on all parties involved to show their sense of responsibility. We call on the Ukrainian authorities to take all measures necessary to ensure civil peace and intercommunal coexistence, to restore the country and to take the legitimate interests of the Russian Federation into account. We expect all of Ukraine's neighbours to assist it in this difficult task.

France and the European Union stand ready to contribute to the peaceful settlement of the crisis. The President of the French Republic has called for swift and coordinated action from the European Union, which will be determined at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 3 March.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.